

Workplace Spirituality, Leadership, and Psychological Well-being Among Faculty at a Private Christian University

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Abstract

This project examines the ways in which differentiation of self (DoS) and spiritual leadership impact work and personal burnout that contributes to psychological well-being. Work and family conflict plays an important role in both understanding burnout and psychological well-being, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings represent a single snapshot from the beginning of the COVID-19 health crisis that indicate spiritual leadership is important to professors' positive psychological experiences, and that differentiation provides important psychological resources for guarding against burnout.

Key words: leadership; differentiation of self; work and family balance; workplace spirituality; COVID-19; psychological well-being

The construct of burnout has been defined as "a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job, and is defined by the three dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy" (Maslach, et al., 2001, p. 397). Burnout has been shown to exist in a multitude of industries and businesses including higher education. Burnout in faculty members is affected by work-family conflict (WFC), job insecurity, influence, job demands, workload, value conflict, and role clarity (Sabagh et. al, 2018; Zábrowská, et al., 2018). Leadership in academia can address burnout by reducing workloads and administrative paperwork and providing appropriate resources to faculty members. Additionally, leadership can implement policies that reduce WFC (Zábrowská, et al., 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic caused many higher education institutions to change from in-person teaching to an online version of teaching (i.e., asynchronous or synchronous). A dissertation conducted by Dunbar in 2017, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, found no difference between the burnout rates of full-time faculty members teaching in the traditional brick-and-mortar setting and full-time faculty members

teaching in a fully online setting. In other words, this study revealed that burnout should be addressed equally in higher education without regard to the teaching modality. However, faculty normally teaching in-person were moved to an online modality during the COVID-19 pandemic. This sudden shift caused burnout related to professional identity and burnout related to job satisfaction (Chen, et al., 2020). Faculty that viewed this change in teaching modality (in-person to online) as a threat showed increased levels of burnout and may have experienced negative student ratings (Daumiller, et al., 2021).

Faculty burnout has multiple negative effects on the institution. The dissertation by Dunbar (2017) demonstrates that full-time faculty members experiencing the emotional exhaustion component of burnout or the cynicism component of burnout are more likely to leave their institutions. Additionally, these individuals more likely to leave will display less professional efficacy in the workplace. This information shows that burnout affects full-time faculty turnover and retention. Research indicates that the cost of

replacing an employee (recruiting, hiring, and training) ranges between six and nine months of the position's salary (Bevis, 2018). As such, burnout affects an institution's bottom line, full-time faculty, workplace culture, turnover, retention, etc.

Research on burnout has expanded to focus on the organizational and family life experiences as they impact burnout. Workplace spirituality and leadership are ways to understand the organizational contribution to burnout. Leadership focuses on the organizational and managerial dimensions of work while work and family balance focus on the interrole negotiations between work and family life.

Focusing on leadership first, Northouse (2019) has defined it as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 6). Northouse describes six practical dimensions of leadership as: a trait, an ability, a skill, a behavior, a relationship, and a process of influence. Northouse concludes that leadership generally includes components of all of these dimensions. For example, leadership traits include intelligence, confidence, charisma, determination, sociability, and integrity (Northouse, 2019). Leadership as a concept focuses on processes which include one's ability to influence others to accomplish a goal. In other words, leadership incorporates one's traits, abilities, skills, and actions (behavior) in order to influence others individually and in groups to accomplish a goal or goals.

Many organizational benefits accrue when leaders display traits like integrity, which is described as the quality of honesty and trustworthiness. Leaders who display integrity are considered trusted, and dependable. Their employees know that they will do what they promise to do (Northouse, 2018, 2022). In light of the trust factors related to integrity one might argue that of all of the qualities of a leader described by Northouse, integrity is the most important. A study conducted by Simonsen, et al. in 2014 showed that students who displayed the strongest leadership traits and participated in college leadership activities ranked integrity and intelligence as their strongest leadership traits. A practical example of leadership based on integrity is David Green, the CEO of Hobby Lobby. He contributes his success in part to leading with integrity. From 1990 to 1999 his organization experienced 1271% growth, while his focus was on instilling integrity throughout the organization (Green & Merrill, 2005). Lipmen-Blumen (2005) points out that some leaders utilize charisma to influence others for their own personal gains. This practice, in the long term, may be detrimental to the organization. These toxic leaders often violate basic human rights and utilize their power to play to their followers' basest fears. These types of leaders typically thrive in organizations that lack the checks and balances necessary to keep leaders working towards the organization's benefit (Padilla et al, 2007).

A prominent theory of leadership discussed by Northouse (2018) is servant leadership. Servant leadership prioritizes the assurance that the needs of others are cared for. Therefore, servant leadership is rooted in altruism. "It makes altruism the central component of the leadership process and frames leadership around the principle of caring for others" (Northouse, 2019, p. 15). Servant leadership emphasizes how supporting others' needs allows organizations to accomplish goals. The leader is a servant who is engaged in collaborating with others in the organization to foster health and well-being.

Educators as Servant Leaders

The *Servant Leadership* model is important for understanding educators in faith-based university settings. First introduced in 1970, Robert Greenleaf penned the concept which focuses on helping or *serving* others (i.e. students). Common traits of one who subscribes to the characteristics of *Servant Leadership* include: (a) authenticity, (b) ethical leadership, (c) trustworthiness, and (d) willingness to *serve* others (Eva, et al., 2019). Greenleaf (2008) stated:

A new moral principle is emerging, which holds that the only authority deserving one's allegiance is that which is freely and knowingly granted by the led to the leader in response to, and in proportion to, the clearly evident Servant stature of the leader. (p. 33)

Sendjava (2019) adds: "Given their innate orientation to serve others altruistically, servant leaders naturally engage in *extra-role* [emphasis added] behaviors and are likely to be seen as positive role models by their followers" (p. 621). Furthermore, to effectively serve as a leader and servant, Greenleaf stated that "one must be willing to be a *servant* [emphasis added] first and aspire to lead" (p. 35). Thus, considering the current work environment of many college professors, that is, being available and responding to student inquires 24/7, increased class sizes (increasing the number of those needing to be served), and other added-on responsibilities due to the COVID pandemic potentially adds additional pressure, stress, and anxiety for the professor.

Reflecting on servant leadership and the educator, Anderson (2013, 2019) emphasizes that teaching is a *ministry* in this perspective. In other words, teaching is a divine calling where educators minister to others by facilitating their development. This focus aids educators in seeing each student as being made in God's image, and it fosters a highly idiosyncratic approach to supporting each student in developing his or her abilities.

The educator as servant leader incorporates identity as an image-bearer of God with the vocational expression of that

identity in teaching. Anderson (2013) operationalizes servant leadership in Christian educators as: (a) possessing a Christian worldview, (b) focusing on continued personal and professional development to benefit students, (c) having knowledge and competence in one's field, (d) being effective teachers, and (e) developing collaborative relationships with students, fellow educators, and agencies and other stakeholders. The emphasis here is on leadership as an educator by facilitating student growth via collaboration with others. This type of leadership via servanthood takes on spiritual significance by incorporating the Christian worldview - especially those aspects reflecting identity and divine image-bearing.

The goal of this servant leadership is ultimately transformation. Anderson (2019) describes this transformation:

Teachers who are servant leaders seek transformation in the lives of those they lead, while at the same time being open to their own transformation by learning new skills and approaches to teaching and through increased understanding of the learners they serve. (p. 2)

This focus on leadership as transformation views education relationally and in terms of discipleship. That is, educators that embody the call of God to be teachers and build relationships that are transformative in nature. These relationships undergird the education process, and they result in increased competence for both the student and the teacher.

Teaching as an expression of servant leadership is ultimately a form of discipleship. In other words, Christian education is as much about spiritual development, what theologians would call sanctification, as much as it is about knowledge and information regarding an academic discipline. Christian faculty embody their relationship with God to their students. One of the main findings associated with the integration of faith and learning (IFL) is the evidence of the importance of faculty having an ongoing personal relationship with God (Matthias & Wrobbel, 2013; Sherr et al., 2007; Sorenson, 1997; Staton et al., 1998). Students who perceive that a faculty member has an ongoing relationship with God use that connection with the faculty member to be a basis for their own IFL exploration (Sorenson, 1997; Staton, et al., 1998). Servant leadership on the part of the faculty member facilitates this spiritual development for students.

Spiritual Leadership Theory and Servant Leadership

Spiritual leadership theory (SLT) emphasizes how servant leadership embodies workplace spirituality (Fry, 2003; Fry, Vittuci, & Cedillo, 2005; Sweeney & Fry, 2012). Workplace

spirituality emphasizes the meaning-making dimensions of work. Workplace spirituality describes how the workplace embodies meaningful experiences that incorporate a sense of transcendence, purposeful work, connecting with others and a higher power, experiencing one's true or authentic self, serving others, and belonging to an ethical and good organization (See Frederick & Dunbar, 2019; Millman, Gatling, & Kim, 2018; Millman, Gatling, & Bradley-Geist, 2017). Spiritual leadership, especially embodied by faculty who are engaged in practices associated with servant leadership, provides examples for students to engage in meaning-making and to embrace values-based career practices.

Spiritual leadership entails the three primary traits or characteristics that support individuals in deriving meaning from work and contributing to personal, organizational, and social well-being. SLT's three primary traits or characteristics are vision, altruistic love, and faith/hope. Vision is a trait leading to increased self-awareness, self-regulation, and agency. Vision embeds one into his or her organization and cultural values. Further, vision is teleological or entails a goal orientation. Faith/hope holds the characteristics of patience and perseverance. As a result, faith/hope motivates individuals to develop needed skills and to face challenges related to embodying one's values (vision). Finally, altruistic love focuses on the interpersonal actions related to organizational citizenship. That is, altruistic love entails care, concern, understanding, and acceptance of others in the organization. Because SLT is a trait approach, it fosters leadership character strengths like agency, self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and connection to others, and these strengths improve employee well-being (Sweeney & Fry, 2012). These traits are individual faculties that result in deepened personal meaning-making and sense of purpose related to work.

SLT emphasizes the collaborative and support use of leadership to encourage others in the accomplishment of organizational goals. The three components of SLT, vision, love, and faith/hope are the embodiment of servant leadership. That is, servant leaders demonstrate the traits of vision by expressing the Christian worldview and a commitment to the organization. Faith/hope are expressed as resilience and encouragement. Additionally, faith/hope fosters human growth and development through learning and skill-refinement. Finally, love fosters citizenship skills at the organizational and individual levels.

Servant leadership and SLT emphasize the *person* of the educator. In Anderson's view (2013, 2019), the person of the educator is foundational to the types of leadership that result in personal transformation. The person of the educator engages in reflective practice in order to develop skills necessary to facilitate the development of knowledge

in each student. Ultimately, the educator as a servant-leader results in the transformation of the school.

SLT emphasizes the connection between the person and the organization via the three virtues of vision, faith/hope, and love. By combining the SLT virtues with the personal and relational emphasis of servant leadership, one could argue that servant leadership embodies the SLT virtues. To the extent that a servant leaders embody those virtues, transformation occurs. Servant leadership, then, describes how the person of the educator should embody virtues like vision, faith/hope, and love in order to facilitate transformation.

Work and Family Conflict and Differentiation of Self

The work and family life burnout (WFB) dimension focuses on the potential conflict between work and family life. According to Kalliath and Brough (2008), there are approximately six recognized definitions of WFB. Each definition focuses on multiple roles, the equality of work roles and family roles, the level of satisfaction between the work and family roles, the importance in fulfilling multiple roles (work and family roles), a relational balance concerning conflict and enrichment between multiple roles, and the perceived control between various roles. Interrole conflict relates to the incompatibilities of multiple roles. Examples of incompatibilities include time spent, available resources, and stressors associated with each role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Frederick & Dunbar, 2019). That is, the educator's family provides an important domain that drastically influences the ability to express the virtues of vision, faith/hope, and love. In other words, there is a significant level of spill-over from the family to work domain which influences the ability of educators to influence students.

One of the most important family-derived psychological concepts to aid individuals dealing with burnout and interrole conflict is the differentiation of self (DoS) (Frederick & Dunbar, 2019). There are two main dimensions to DoS. First, DoS focuses on balancing individuality and togetherness drives. That is, DoS is the relationship characteristic that describes how individuals are able to maintain a sense of personal identity and autonomy while remaining in relationships with others. This aspect of DoS is interpersonal in nature.

The second main dimension of DoS focuses on emotion regulation. Frederick and Dunbar (2019) describe it this way: "DoS allows one to manage anxiety in order to respond to one's environment and relationships in times of stress" (p. 26). In other words, intrapersonal DoS describes the individual's ability to respond to one's experiences and relationships in a values-based, identity-driven manner. That is, one's identity facilitates the ability to understand

and manage unpleasant experiences while maintaining one's commitment to one's identity.

Given the unique global pandemic due to COVID-19, work and family conflict is an increasingly important variable to research related to burnout and job stress. As many educators transitioned to 100% online teaching from home, the potential for work and family conflict increased. This increase in work and family conflict, stress related to the pandemic itself, and changes in job expectations culminate in the potential for increased burnout.

Research Question

This project builds on previous research examining the relationship between being a professor and experiencing burnout. In particular, we are examining the ways in which differentiation of self (DoS) and spiritual leadership affect work-related and personal burnout. Work and family conflict play an important role in both understanding burnout and psychological well-being, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Research indicates that DoS generally assists individuals in preventing and coping with burnout; and aids them in improving their psychological well-being (Frederick, Purrington, & Dunbar, 2016). Further, DoS is associated with more relational aspects of spirituality, while spirituality is a robust resource for preventing and coping with burnout (Frederick, Dunbar, Purrington, Ardito, & Fisher, 2018).

The primary research questions for this study are: (a) What role does workplace spirituality, especially SLT, have on positive psychological experiences?, (b) Does SLT provide psychological coping resources for educators dealing with burnout, and (c) What roles do SLT and differentiation have on positive psychological experiences, negative psychological experiences, and burnout?

Methods

The authors developed an online questionnaire to be distributed to the faculty of a private Christian university in Southern California in the United States of America. This project was approved by the Internal Review Board (IRB) at the authors' university (Project number IRB # 0731920 EXP). Subjects provided consent prior to completing survey.

The measures for this study include the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory – Work Related and Personal Experience of Burnout; the Chabot Differentiation of Self Scale; the Positive Affect and Negative Affect Scales (PANAS) developed by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988), a demographic questionnaire, the Spiritual Leadership Survey (Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005), and the Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian (1996) work-family and family-work conflict scales.

Measures

Differentiation of self was measured using The Chabot Emotional Differentiation Scale (Licht & Chabot, 2006). This measures participants' intrapersonal levels of differentiation which focuses on emotion regulation using the ability of respondents to separate thoughts from feelings (Bowen, 2004; Papero, 2014; Titelman, 2014). The Chabot scale is a 17-item, Likert type paper-and-pencil measure of differentiation. The items use a 5-point format ranging from 1 = never to 5 = always. Licht and Chabot (2006) report an internal consistency of .80 for this scale; in the present study, the Chabot scale has an internal consistency of .78.

Spiritual leadership is measured using the Spiritual Leadership Survey (SLS) (Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005). This survey is designed to measure spiritual leadership as defined by vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love which lends itself to spiritual survival in the workplace via a sense of calling, membership in the organization, and organizational commitment. The SLS is one way to operationalize workplace spirituality, which is important to understanding the employees' and organizations' comprehension of the meaning for work (see Frederick & Dunbar, 2019). The SLS contains seven dimensions which are incorporated into the present study (α reported reflect participants in present study): SLA Vision ($\alpha = 0.91$), SLA Hope/faith ($\alpha = 0.94$), SLA Altruistic love ($\alpha = 0.95$), SLA Calling ($\alpha = 0.97$), SLA Membership ($\alpha = 0.94$), SLA Organizational commitment ($\alpha = 0.72$), and SLA Productivity ($\alpha = 0.67$).

Burnout was measured using the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) (Kristensen et al., 2005). The CBI consists of three subscales. The first measures personal burnout, work related burnout, and client related burnout. *Personal burnout* most closely reflects emotional exhaustion and fatigue experiences associated with burnout. *Work related burnout* focuses on burnout associated with the individual's work. That is, this scale focuses on the amounts of burnout the individual attributes to his or her work. *Client related burnout* is associated specifically with work dealing with various types of clients. In the present study, only person-related and work-related burnout are used.

Work and family conflict measures the interrole conflict between work and family life (Netemeyer et al., 1996). Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian (1996) develop two

scales associated with interrole conflict. First, work to family conflict (WFC) entails the negative spillover from work to family, while family to work conflict (FWC) assesses the spillover from family to work. Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian report reliabilities for WFC at .88 and FWC at .86. For the present study, data indicate an α reliability of 0.94 for WFC and 0.93 for FWC.

The PANAS scales measure both positive and negative affect (Watson et al., 1988). This scale has been used in research on subjective distress and spirituality (Powers et al, 2007). The PANAS consists of two scales: a positive affect and a negative affect scale. Respondents are asked to identify on a 5-point scale (1 = very slightly or not at all and 5 = extremely) how positive emotions (like interest and excitement) and how negative emotions, (like irritable and distressed) apply to their experiences in the past few weeks. Watson et al. (1988) report internal consistencies for the scales of .87 for positive and .87 for negative feelings. In the present study, the positive scale reliability is .90 and the negative scale is .88.

Results

Table 1 represents a summary of the demographic categories of the sample. The average age of respondents is 48.22 years. Most of the faculty respondents have worked at the university between 1 and 10 years (62.8% of the sample). Over three-quarters of the sample hold terminal degrees (76.3%). There are differences between the number of female (54.2%) to male (44.9%) respondents. Participants predominantly identify White or Caucasian as their ethnicity (67.8%) followed by Hispanic/Latino (8.5%) while African American and Asian American are tied at 6.8%. The majority of the respondents teach for traditional, face-to-face programs (80.5%) compared with online faculty members (19.5%).

Data were analyzed three ways using SPSS version 22. First, sample means and standard deviations were calculated for DoS, Spiritual leadership, burnout, work and family conflict as well as PANAS. Second, a correlation coefficient matrix was created to determine the nature of relationships among study variables (see table 2). Third and finally, hierarchical regression was used to determine the relative contributions of DoS, spiritual leadership, burnout, and work and family conflict on positive and negative affect.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics

Variable ¹	Total %
Age (Years) (M/SD)	(48.22/10.78)
Gender	
Male	44.9
Female	54.2
Ethnicity	
Black or African American	6.8
Asian American	6.8
Caucasian	67.8
Hispanic/Latino	8.5
Multiracial Race	3.4
Other	.8
Prefer not to answer	5.1
Years at CBU	
Less than 1 year	5.9
1-5 years	31.4
6-10 years	31.4
11-15 years	19.5
16-20 years	7.6
20 years or more	3.4
Marital Status	
Single	6.8
Married	88.1
Divorced	4.2
Levels of Education	
Bachelors	.8
Masters	22.9
Doctorate	76.3
Primary Teaching Method	
Online	19.5
Traditional	80.5

¹(N=118)

Table two displays the correlation coefficient matrix and sample means for the study variables. The patterns to note in the correlation table include the predicted direction of relationships between the variables. For example, both personal ($r = .56, p \leq 0.05$) and work ($r = .46, p \leq 0.01$) burnout are positively correlated with negative affect. This holds true for WFC ($r = .30, p \leq 0.01$) and FWC ($r = .24, p \leq 0.05$) and negative affect as well. Differentiation is negatively correlated with personal ($r = -.43, p \leq 0.01$) and work ($r = -.39, p \leq 0.01$) burnout, negative affect ($r = -.63, p \leq 0.05$), WFC ($r = -.24, p \leq 0.05$) and FWC ($r = -.27, p \leq 0.05$). Additionally, SLA vision ($r = -.21, p \leq 0.05$), SLA membership ($r = -.24, p \leq 0.05$), and SLA organizational commitment ($r = -.23, p \leq 0.05$) are negatively associated with WFC conflict.

A particularly important finding related to spiritual leadership entails the fact that none of the spiritual leadership scales were significantly correlated with differentiation of self, burnout, negative affect, or FWC. However, SLA vision ($r = .22, p \leq 0.00$), SLA Hope/faith ($r = .38, p \leq 0.00$), SLA calling ($r = .23, p \leq 0.00$), and SLA organizational commitment ($r = .28, p \leq 0.00$) were positively associated with positive affect. In other words, spiritual leadership was associated with positive, not negative psychological experiences.

Table three displays the results of the hierarchical regression analysis for the study's variables on positive affect. As would be predicted based on the correlations described above, only spiritual leadership is a significant predictor of positive affect (accounting for 12% of the

Table 2**Correlation Coefficient Matrix**

<i>Variables (Mean/Standard Deviation)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1 SLA Vision (4.17/.82)	-													
2 SLA Hope/Faith (4.09/.86)	.80** (100)	-												
3 SLA Altruistic Love (3.77/.95)	.68** (101)	.64** (100)	-											
4 SLA Calling (4.64/.85)	.57** (101)	.46** (101)	.29** (101)	-										
5 SLA Membership (3.73/1.00)	.68** (101)	.61** (101)	.87** (101)	.31** (102)	-									
6 SLA Organizational Commitment (3.78/.78)	.58** (101)	.51** (101)	.66** (101)	.34** (102)	.71** (102)	-								
7 SLA Productivity (4.19/.71)	.25* (101)	.24* (101)	.14 (101)	.15 (102)	.16 (102)	.25* (102)	-							
8 DoS (65.66/5.80)	-.00 (93)	.00 (93)	.00 (93)	-.09 (94)	.01 (94)	.18 (94)	.08 (94)	-						
9 Pos PANAS (34.40/6.19)	.22* (81)	.38** (91)	.12 (81)	.23* (82)	.19 (82)	.28** (82)	.12 (82)	.01 (82)	-					
10 Neg PANAS (20.20/5.93)	-.03 (81)	-.11 (81)	-.13 (81)	.08 (82)	-.18 (82)	-.19 (82)	-.04 (82)	-.63** (81)	-.03 (80)	-				
11 CBI Personal (42.99/19.19)	-.07 (90)	-.13 (90)	-.11 (90)	.06 (91)	-.12 (91)	-.15 (91)	-.12 (91)	-.43** (89)	-.28* (81)	.56** (81)	-			
12 CBI Work (7.95/4.76)	.01 (86)	-.10 (86)	-.02 (87)	-.02 (87)	-.04 (87)	-.15 (87)	-.03 (87)	-.39** (85)	-.32** (79)	.46** (78)	.60** (86)	-		
13 WFC Scale (20.67/7.66)	-.16 (91)	-.21* (91)	-.17 (91)	-.04 (92)	-.24* (92)	-.23* (92)	-.16 (92)	-.24* (90)	-.25* (82)	.30** (82)	.59** (91)	.60** (87)	-	
14 FWC Scale (12.86/6.77)	-.01 (91)	-.11 (91)	-.10 (91)	.07 (92)	-.05 (92)	-.07 (92)	.10 (92)	-.27* (90)	-.03 (79)	.24* (82)	.33** (91)	.23* (82)	.50** (92)	-

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$

variance associated with positive affect). This finding that respondents understand their vocation as professors along spiritual lines, and that this spiritual view influences their positive experiences. That is, respondents' views of calling and other spiritual aspects of leadership are reflected in positive psychological experiences. The positive impact of SLT exceeds the negative experiences of burnout, work and family conflict, and the positive effects of differentiation on psychological well-being.

Table four documents that spiritual leadership is not a significant predictor of negative affect. However, work and family conflict (accounting for 5% of the variance), burnout (accounting for 32% of the variance) and, differentiation of self (accounting for 47% of the variance) are significant predictors of negative affect. Adding DoS to the series of predictors accounts for a total of 15% of the unique variance on negative psychological experiences or psychological distress. Burnout and work and family conflict are significant contributors to psychological distress, while differentiation provides a psychological resource against these negative experiences, associated with negative affect, and this

relationship is in the hypothesized direction ($\beta = -.45$). This means that work and family conflict, burnout, and differentiation are focused

Discussion

There are three main aspects of interpreting the findings described above. First, there have been profound changes in work and family life and balance due to COVID-19 and the ensuing public health response to it. These changes have found more parents and children spending increasing amounts of time together. Children have been engaging in online and remote learning, while their parents have been asked to work from home and support their children in online learning. These changes in work and family have increased the levels of stress (Canady, 2020). These changes culminate in increased stress and increases in interrole conflict which is foundational to understanding burnout. This is reflected in the association of work and family conflict with negative psychological experiences.

Table 3*Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Positive PANAS*

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Block 1	B	SE B	B	SE B	B	SE B	B	SE B
<i>SLA Vision</i>	-1.87	1.20	-1.90	1.19	-1.53	1.19	-1.36	1.18
<i>SLA Hope/Faith</i>	3.23	1.01	3.15	1.01	2.88	1.01	2.74	1.00
<i>SLA Altruistic Love</i>	-1.78	1.23	-1.34	1.24	-1.67	1.23	-1.68	1.23
<i>SLA Calling</i>	.50	.73	.56	.73	.61	.72	.48	.72
<i>SLA Membership</i>	.69	1.19	.19	1.21	.67	1.21	.68	1.20
<i>SLA Organizational Commitment</i>	1.68	.98	1.59	.97	1.29	.97	1.62	.98
<i>SLA Productivity</i>	.00	.77	-.30	.78	-.22	.77	-.12	.77
Block 2								
<i>WFC Scale</i>	-	-	-.18	.09	-.02	.11	.02	.11
<i>FWC Scale</i>	-	-	.11	.10	.09	.10	.05	.10
Block 3								
<i>11 CBI Personal</i>	-	-	-	-	-.05	.04	-.06	.04
<i>12 CBI Work</i>	-	-	-	-	-.22	.16	-.28	.16
Block 4								
<i>Chabot DoS</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.17	.11
Constant	24.45		28.64		28.91		40.84	
Adjusted R²	.12		.14		.17		.19	
F change	3.03**		2.03		2.67		2.65	

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$ **Table 4***Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Negative PANAS*

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Block 1	B	SE B	B	SE B	B	SE B	B	SE B
<i>SLA Vision</i>	1.22	1.22	1.00	1.20	.27	1.04	.69	.91
<i>SLA Hope/Faith</i>	-1.05	1.03	-.66	1.02	-.12	.88	-.48	.77
<i>SLA Altruistic Love</i>	.71	1.26	.63	1.26	1.30	1.08	.82	.95
<i>SLA Calling</i>	.93	.75	.74	.74	.55	.63	.22	.56
<i>SLA Membership</i>	-1.24	1.22	-1.08	1.22	-2.04	1.06	-2.03	.93
<i>SLA Organizational Commitment</i>	-1.02	1.00	-.81	.98	-.22	.84	.59	.76
<i>SLA Productivity</i>	-.05	.79	-.01	.79	-.10	.67	.14	.59
Block 2								
<i>WFC Scale</i>	-	-	.13	.09	-.22	1.00	-.14	.09
<i>FWC Scale</i>	-	-	.09	1.00	.12	.08	.04	.08
Block 3								
<i>11 CBI Personal</i>	-	-	-	-	.14	.03	1.00	.03
<i>12 CBI Work</i>	-	-	-	-	.38	.14	.22	.13
Block 4								
<i>Chabot DoS</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.43	.08
Constant	21.11		16.19		15.08		44.81	
Adjusted R²	.00		.05		.32		.47	
F change	1.04		3.20*		18.96**		27.50**	

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$

Second, we would argue that these stress levels are reflected in the ways in which spiritual leadership, work and family conflict, burnout, and differentiation relate to positive and negative affect. Spiritual leadership is the only variable to account for a significant amount of variance associated with positive affect. When compared with work and family conflict, burnout, and differentiation, spiritual leadership is the only significant predictor despite the significant correlations among those variables. More specifically, vision, hope/faith, calling, and organizational commitment are associated with higher levels of positive affect. This makes sense as spiritual leadership entails one's views that work fulfils a spiritual, transcendent purpose in one's life and for the world. This meaning-and-purpose view of work would be tied to positive affect.

Spirituality played an important meaning-making role associated with the respondents' well-being as one would expect from faculty at a Christian institution of higher education. That is, there is a shared vision, the Christian worldview, undergirding both the faculty and the university's understanding of the purpose of education (See Anderson, 2013, 2019). Spirituality provides an important meaning-making function that is reflected in positive psychological well-being.

Third, the evidence from our study reflects emerging evidence on differentiation of self and coping. Emerging research identifies differentiation as an aspect of self-regulation (Bowen, 2004; Jankowski & Vaughn, 2009; Jankowski & Sandage, 2012; Skowron et al., 2003; Titelman, 2014). This means that differentiation provides an important psychological tool in aiding individuals to cope with stress – stress at home and at work. Given the unique ability of differentiation to account for variance associated with negative affect, over and above spiritual leadership, burnout, and work and family conflict, this seems relevant for our respondents. Perhaps DoS allows individuals to monitor stress levels and respond in a meaningful and value-based manner.

In reflecting on the role of burnout and negative affect, work and family conflict seems especially relevant. Work and family conflict contributes significantly to burnout via interrole conflict (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003; Kalliath & Brough, 2008). Interrole conflict orbits around time, strain, and behavior (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Differentiation provides the intrapersonal resources to: (a) determine the salience, i.e., relative importance of time, strain, and behavior demands, and (b) respond in the values-based manner in order to appropriately address the time, strain, and behavior demands.

One view from Bowen's theory describes differentiation as self-regulation, so that one has the ability to experience one's feelings but not be reactive to them (Bowen, 2004; Kerr & Bowen, 1988; Skowron et al., 2003; Jankowski & Vaughn, 2009; Jankowski & Sandage, 2012). Based on responses to our survey, respondents with higher levels of differentiation have lower levels of burnout, work and family conflict, and negative affect. These patterns indicate that differentiation is an important aspect of self-regulation.

For respondents in this study, differentiation supports faculty's ability to manage burnout, as well as work and family conflict, and to moderate negative affect. That is, the evidence from respondents indicates that DoS is an important psychological ability to cope with burnout and lower negative affect at times of high stress. DoS being the single best predictor of negative affect suggests that respondents with higher levels of DoS are able to manage stressors and to lower their negative experiences. This result is highlighted by the finding that DoS is not a predictor of positive affect. That is, generally positive experiences are unrelated to DoS while DoS buffers respondents from negative affect, burnout at work and its personal experiences as well as lowers work and family conflict.

Conclusion and limitations

Differentiation as self-regulation emerged as an important finding for Christian educators at a small private, Christian university. Given the global COVID-19 health crisis, burnout, work and family conflict, as well as negative emotional experience, seem to be increasing. The emotional regulation function of differentiation seems to provide an important psychological resource in preventing and coping with burnout, managing work and family conflict, and lessening negative emotional experience.

Limitations

There are three main limitations to the present study. First, the global health crisis makes assessing for stress, burnout, and work and family conflict difficult. That is, it is reasonable to theorize that respondents to the survey would have much higher-than-normal burnout levels and negative affect as compared to the previous year. This is perhaps reflected in the different patterns observed between positive and negative affect.

Second, this study sample is very small, and the sample consisted of only one small private, Christian university in the Southwestern part of the United States. It is necessary to validate the findings by including more universities and eventually expanding this study to public as well as private universities.


Finally, the findings represent a single snapshot from the beginning of the COVID-19 health crisis as sampling began in late February 2020. As the health crisis is continuing, including more longitudinal sampling methods would provide insight into how professors are coping with work and family balance, burnout, and emotional experiences. This longitudinal approach could assess learning strategies and ascertain fluctuations in work and family balance.

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